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Guerrilla war publications owner testifies

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WASHINGTON — A former Green Beret major said Tuesday his Boulder publishing house probably would stop selling books on guerrilla warfare which some claim have been instruction manuals for American radicals.

Robert K. Brown, owner and publisher of Panther Publications, indicated that he might stop selling such books as "150 Questions for Guerrillas" and "Total Resistance" because of the "heat" he has received.

Brown, a wiry graduate of the University of Colorado, bristled when Sen. John L. McClellan, D-Ark., attempted to label him as a knowing supporter of revolutionary causes during the Senate government operations subcommittee hearing.

Brown conceded that some of the books may have been "misused," but heatedly denied that the two-man publication house was set up to supply training material for revolutionaries.

He repeatedly told McClellan that he was supplying books to "guerrilla warfare buffs" similar to Civil War buffs or World War II buffs.

'Gleam in Huey Newton's eye'

He said the business was established in 1963, "long before the Black Panther party was a

gleam in Huey Newton's eye," referring to the cofounder of the party.

During Brown's 60 minutes of testimony, which kept the hearing room intrigued, he told of helping to found a pro-Castro "26th of July" group while a student at CU, making three trips to Cuba 1958, 1959 and 1960.

In 1960, he said, he became disenchanted with the Cuban leader, and helped organize anti-revolutionary groups in this country.

In 1968, Brown re-joined the Army and served 16 months in Vietnam, including six months with a Special Forces unit near the Cambodian border.

McClellan, who heard earlier witnesses call Brown's operation a prime source of guerrilla training manuals, read from several radical publications which urged their readers to send away for the 25-cent catalogue of publications available.

Brown replied with a crisp "negative" each time the senator asked if this was done with his knowledge.

He also said he understands "the concern of the committee and population that these books are being used in a way detrimental to society."

5,000-name mailing list

Although he said there was no way to control who answered the ads and got on his 5,000-name mailing list, he said that books on explosives were sold only to those whose letterhead identified them as someone with a legitimate use for the explosives.

At one point McClellan asked, "Do you feel that you have contributed to violence in this country and building up of guerrillas in this country?"

Brown replied, "No more than General Motors in that the Black Panthers can drive General Motors cars to do bombing. We do not advocate that our books be used for illegitimate means. If we had no scruples we would have run ads in underground magazines."

Brown said armed forces personnel and libraries have purchased his books and emphasized that those buying them to practice the guerrilla trade were in the minority.

Brown said he was not a member of any radical group "right or left." He said the name Panther Publications was chosen because he needed a name in a hurry and thought of an animal that was "cunning and stealthy."

Brown did not tell the committee what kind of heat was being placed on him, but later said that some magazines refused to accept advertising for his publications.

He also said he had been harassed by the CIA and that he planned to publish "an expose on graft and incapability of the CIA in the Florida area."

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